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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, who blesses us beyond what we deserve, we place our trust in You. Because of You, our future is brighter than we can imagine. Thank You for Your unfailing love and compassion, which You have shown from long ages past.

Continue to protect our Nation and world. Lord, give our lawmakers the grace to cherish and cultivate the virtues and values that make a nation great. Save our Senators from those transgressions that bring national ruin. May they keep ever before them Your vision for the people they serve and strive to leave the world better than they found it.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we all agree that the Zika virus is a real threat and needs to be addressed. Republicans and Democrats worked together to pass a bill here in the Senate to provide funding and resources. The

House passed its own version. We are now ready to go to conference and complete a final bill. I will have more to say on that soon, but I appreciate the hard work of Members on both sides of the aisle in crafting the Senate's response.

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG CHEMICAL SAFETY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, after months of hard work and collaboration between both Chambers, last night we were able to pass the first major environmental reform bill in two decades. I know Bonnie Lautenberg has waited for this day for a very long time. The Lautenberg act bears her husband's name and will go a long way toward modernizing our Nation's chemical safety regulations. It will look out for public safety, enhance transparency, and help support manufacturing and our economy. It is good legislation that languished for years until a new Senate majority made it a renewed priority. I want to thank Senators INHOFE and VITTER for all their work with Senators UDALL and MARKEY to move this important measure forward. Its passage represents the latest example of how the Senate is back to work for the American people.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another important matter, the issue before us today, there are an array of threats facing our country. As the chairman of the Armed Services Committee recently observed, "[I]nstead of one great power rival, the United States now faces a series of trans-regional, cross-functional, multi-domain, and long-term strategic competitions."

There are the conventional military challenges, such as adversaries who have been developing and modernizing

their missiles, airframes, ships, and ground forces; there are the asymmetric threats, such as cyber warfare, propaganda, and espionage; and there are nations, such as China, Iran, and Russia, which represent both conventional and asymmetric threats at the very same time.

If we are going to keep Americans safe, we have to prepare for all of these challenges. We have to modernize our defenses, keep up with technological advances, and recognize threats. Passing the National Defense Authorization Act before us would put our country on the path to doing these things. It is a reform bill that will encourage defense innovation. It is a forward-looking bill that will upgrade our missile defenses and modernize our military equipment. It is a responsible bill that will ensure that America's men and women in uniform receive more of the resources they need to confront the challenges of today and the threats of tomorrow.

As I have said before, we should use the remaining months of the Obama administration to prepare the next administration, whether Republican or Democratic, for the variety of challenges it will inherit. These are complex challenges without simple answers. Passing a pro-reform, pro-innovation, pro-modernization defense bill such as this one will leave us better equipped to solve them. It will leave us better equipped to keep Americans and our allies safe in the face of ever-evolving security challenges.

WELCOMING THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today we will welcome the Prime Minister of India as he visits the Capitol. Although this is Narendra Modi's fourth trip to the United States as Prime Minister, it marks the first time he will address a joint meeting of Congress. It also marks the fifth time an Indian Prime Minister has done so

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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